

President Obama has declared a national emergency due to the outbreak of swine flu, which is now present in 46 states.

For more information about the swine flu, visit the CDC web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/> or click [here](#) .

For more information about swine flu in Northwest Ohio, please click [here](#).

You can also call the Ohio Department of Health's toll free number at 866-800-1404.

Most health officials believe that vaccination is the best way to protect against the flu. There are two types of vaccines: a swine flu shot and a nasal spray vaccine. The shot is approved for people six months of age and older, including healthy people, people with chronic medical conditions, and pregnant women. The nasal-spray vaccine is approved for use only in healthy people ages 2 to 49 who are not pregnant.

For information about vaccine clinics in the Lucas County area, click [here](#) .

Vaccination efforts should focus first on people in five target groups who are at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 influenza or related complications, are likely to come in contact with influenza viruses as part of their occupation and could transmit influenza viruses to others in medical care settings, or are close contacts of infants younger than 6 months (who are too young to be vaccinated). These five target groups make up an estimated 159 million people in the U.S. The U.S. government has purchased 250 million doses of 2009 H1N1 vaccine, so no shortage is likely.

Vaccination will continue throughout the influenza season and into the early part of 2010. Flu seasons can last as late as April or May.

Vaccine will be made available as quickly as possible as it rolls off the production lines. Initially, the vaccine will be available in limited quantities.

Medical experts believe that swine flu virus spreads in the same way as regular influenza—mainly through coughing and sneezing. It might also be spread by touching infected objects and then touching your nose or mouth. Infection reportedly causes a wide range of flu-like symptoms, including fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. In addition, many people also have reported nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea.

Everyone should take preventive actions to stop the spread of germs, including frequent hand washing. People who are sick should stay home and avoid contact with others in order to limit further spread of the disease. Despite the vaccinations and preventive measures, the CDC anticipates more cases, more hospitalizations, and more deaths in the U.S. over the fall and winter.